Women and Economic Autonomy in Nova Scotia

Facts and figures

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Women in the labour force

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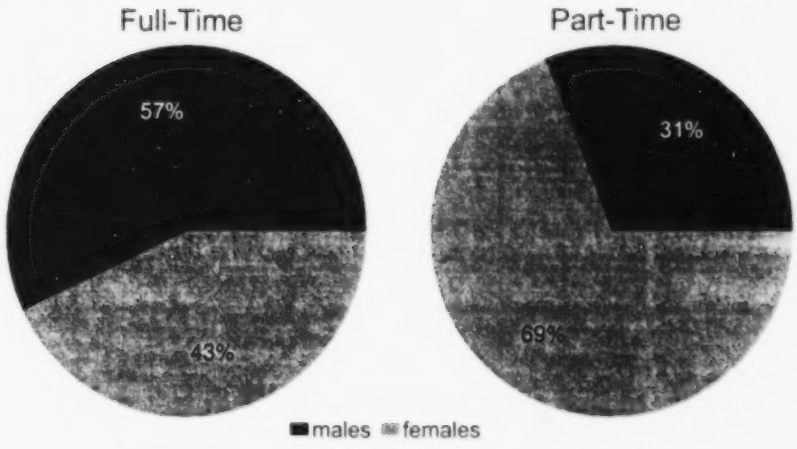
- ♀ Unlike in the past, the majority (53%) of Nova Scotian women are now employed. This is only 8.5 percentage points lower than the proportion of men now employed.
- ♀ One of the most dramatic changes in women's labour force participation over the past 25 years is the increase in the number of women with very young children who are also working for pay. In 1976, only one quarter (25%) of women with children under age 3 worked for pay; by 2003, this had increased to two-thirds (66%).

Full-Time/Part-Time Employment by Sex
Nova Scotia, 2003



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, 2003, CD-ROM 71F0004XCB

- ♀ While women in Nova Scotia make up close to half of the labour force overall, they are slightly under-represented among full-time workers and are very much over-represented among those who work part-time.

Factors such as family responsibilities (including the availability and cost of child care), personal preference, and inability to find full-time work play a major role in women's decision to work part-time.

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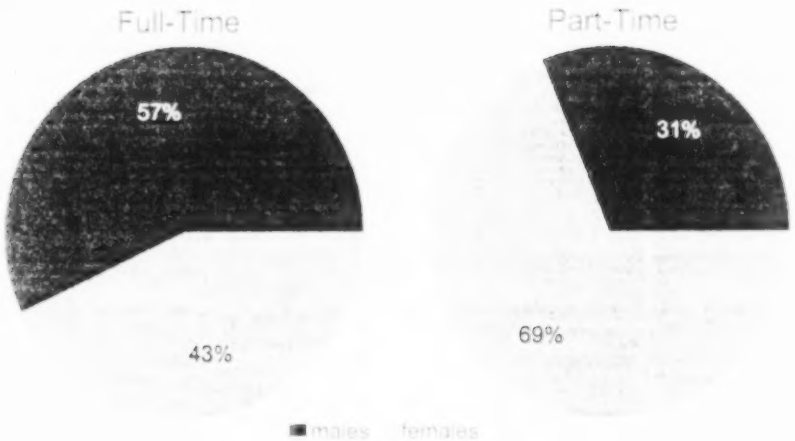


Factors such as family responsibilities (including the availability and cost of child care), personal preference, and inability to find full-time work play a major role in women's decision to work part-time.

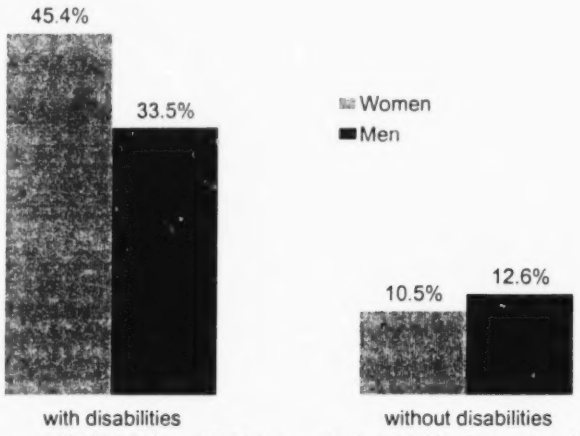
- In the majority of Nova Scotian husband-wife families, both spouses now work for pay. Between 1976 and 2002, the percentage of couple families where the male spouse/partner was the sole provider declined from 43% to 16% while families where the female spouse/partner was the sole earner more than doubled from 5% to 11%.

Not all women are participating equally in Nova Scotia's labour force

- Differences in the labour force experiences of diverse groups within the population are evident.

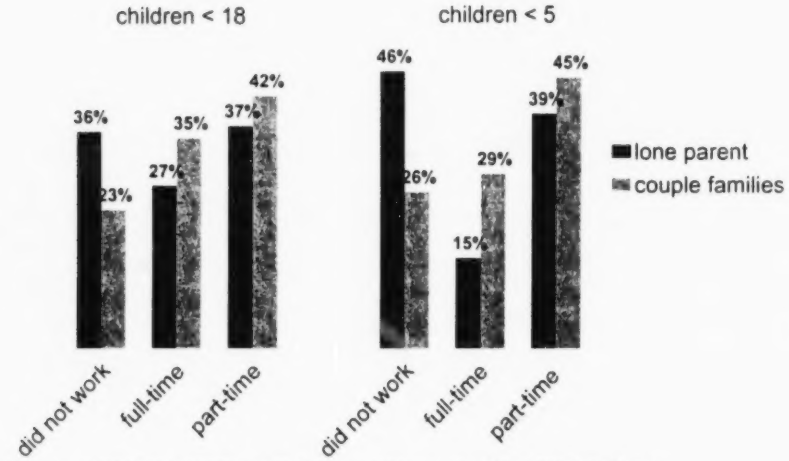
- Unemployment rates of certain groups within the Nova Scotian population are particularly high, for example, those of recently immigrated women, women and men of African descent, Aboriginal women and men living on-reserve, and women and men with disabilities.

Unemployment Rates of Persons with Disabilities
Nova Scotia, 2001



Source: 2001 PALS, from HRDC Labour Market Brief for September 2003

Employment of Mothers with Children
by Family Status - Nova Scotia, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada 2001 Census, table number 97F0021XCB01002.

- Female lone parents, especially those with young children, are less likely to be employed than married mothers, and if employed, are less likely to be working full-time.

- Educational disadvantage is a significant factor for many of these groups.

What and how much paid work are women doing?

♀ Because women's incomes are increasingly important for the economic survival of their families and due, in part, to demographic changes like the aging of the population, women's overall labour force participation has become increasingly similar to men's. There remain, however, some important differences in the nature of women's and men's work.

♀ Seven out of every ten part-time workers in the province are women while only three are men.

♀ Women, more than men, tend to be concentrated in relatively few occupational categories. Over 60% of women workers in the province are in sales/service and clerical/administrative occupations where wages are often low and full-time work is not always available.

Occupational Distribution by Sex
Nova Scotia, 2002

	Women	Men	Women as % of total in occupation
Senior Management	.3%	.5%	33.3%
Other Management	5.9%	9.7%	36.1%
Professional	26.7%	20.1%	55.4%
Clerical and administrative	23.3%	7.1%	75.5%
Sales and service	37.5%	21%	60.4%
Primary	1.1%	6.9%	13%
Trades	1.6%	26.5%	5.5%
Manufacturing	3.5%	8.1%	28.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

♀ Women make up just over one-third (34.3%) of self-employed persons in the province. Close to one in every ten employed women in Nova Scotia is self-employed.

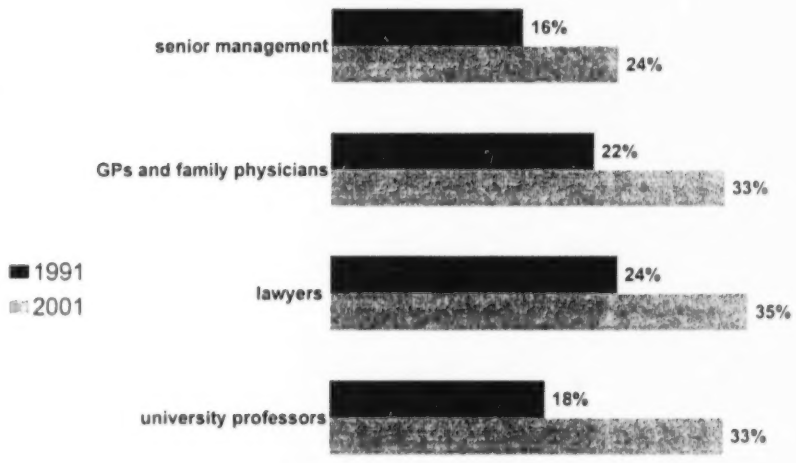
♀ Between 1979 and 2000, the average number of hours Canadian women worked for pay increased by 30% while the average number of hours Canadian men worked for pay declined by 7%.

♀ In 1979, women worked 844 hours for pay, on average, which was half (50%) the number of hours worked by men. In 2000, women worked 1,101 hours for pay, on average, which was 70% of the number of hours worked by men.

Are women advancing?

♀ Many women have made progress in areas of the paid labour force. Women, overall, have increased their numbers in some traditionally male-dominated occupations, particularly management and professional occupations.

Women in High-Level Positions (full-time/full-year)
Nova Scotia, 1991 and 2001

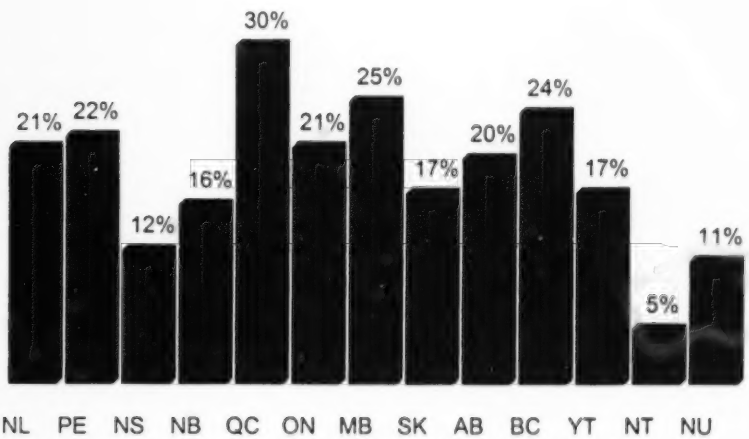


♀ Women now comprise one-third of GPs/family physicians and university professors, slightly more than one-third of lawyers, and close to one quarter of senior managers in the province.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996, 2001 Census Table # 97F0012XCB01023

♀ However, in some occupational areas, such as the trades (3% women) and in natural and applied sciences (16% women), women remain very much under-represented.

Proportion of Women MLAs in Provincial and Territorial Legislatures



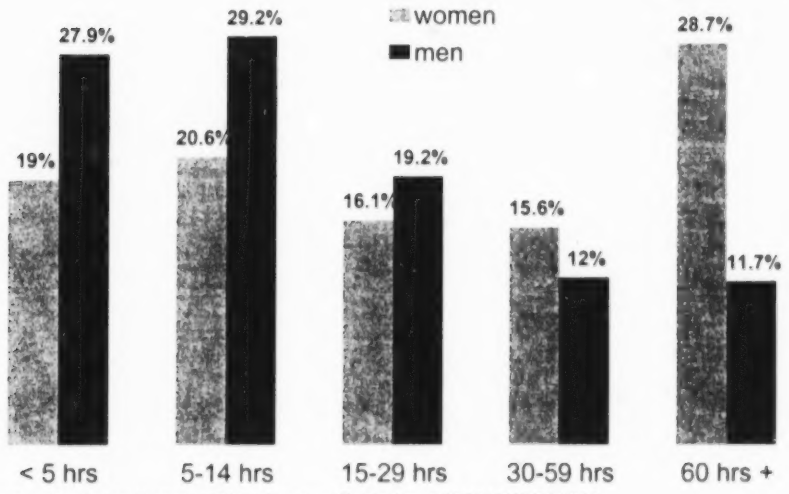
Source: Provincial/Territorial Legislative Assembly Websites as of Dec 03.

♀ Women also remain under-represented in political life. At most, women comprise 30% of MLAs in provincial and territorial legislatures in Canada. Women currently comprise 21% of Members of Parliament in Canada's House of Commons.

Women's Unpaid Work

♀ Women remain responsible for the majority of unpaid work that gets done in the home. Whether it be caring for children, providing care to seniors, or doing housework, women are still putting in longer hours on unpaid work than are men.

Hours per week spent doing unpaid childcare, by sex
Nova Scotia, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, Table No. 97F0013XCB01002.

♀ While men in Nova Scotia are more likely than women to spend small amounts of time (less than 5 hours per week or between 5 and 14 hours per week) caring for children, women are almost two and a half times more likely than men to be spending 60 hours or more per week providing unpaid care to children.

♀ More than half (54%) of women, compared to 31% of men, spend at least 15 hours per week doing unpaid housework. Women are over three times more likely (9.2% versus 2.8%) to do 60 hours + of unpaid housework.

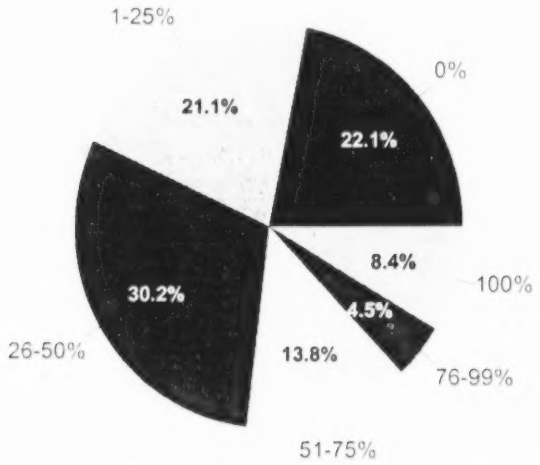
♀ Women do two-thirds of the 25 billion hours of unpaid work that Canadians perform every year[1].

♀ It is estimated that the value of housework is equivalent to 34-to-39% of Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) - about $255 billion per year[1].

Women, income inequality, and poverty

♀ Women are now making substantial contributions to their families' incomes. In fact, without the wife's income almost 4 times as many (from 5.8% to 21.4%) Canadian couple families with children would have fallen below the poverty line in 1999.

Wife's contribution to husband-wife employment income
Nova Scotia, 2001



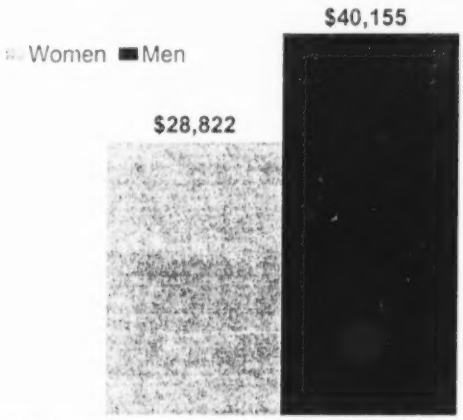
Source: Statistics Canada, Small Area and Administrative Data, 2001

♀ In more than half (57%) of couple families in Nova Scotia, the wife's earnings make a substantial (more than 25%) contribution to family income. In more than one-quarter (27%) of couple families, the wife's income exceeds the husband's.

♀ Despite the increasing importance of women's incomes for their own and their families' survival, the earning power of women remains stubbornly low.

Average Annual Earnings of Full-Time Workers by Sex
Nova Scotia, 2001

♀ In 2001, Nova Scotian women who worked full-time earned, on average, 71.6 cents for every dollar earned by men working full-time. On average women who worked full-time earned $28,822 while their male counterparts earned $40,155.



Source: Statistics Canada, Income Trends in Canada, 1980-2001, Catalogue No. 13F0022XCB

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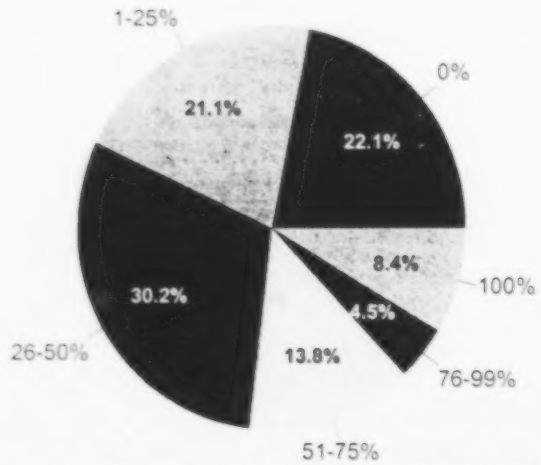

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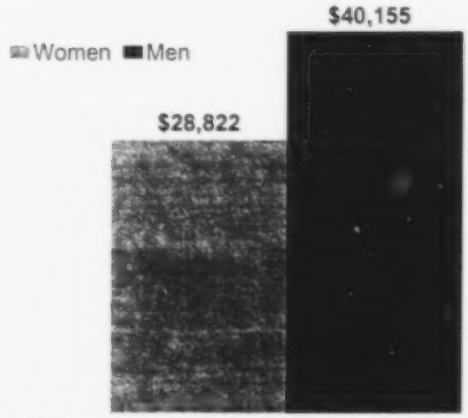


Source: Statistics Canada, Income Trends in Canada, 1980-2001, Catalogue No. 13F0022XCB

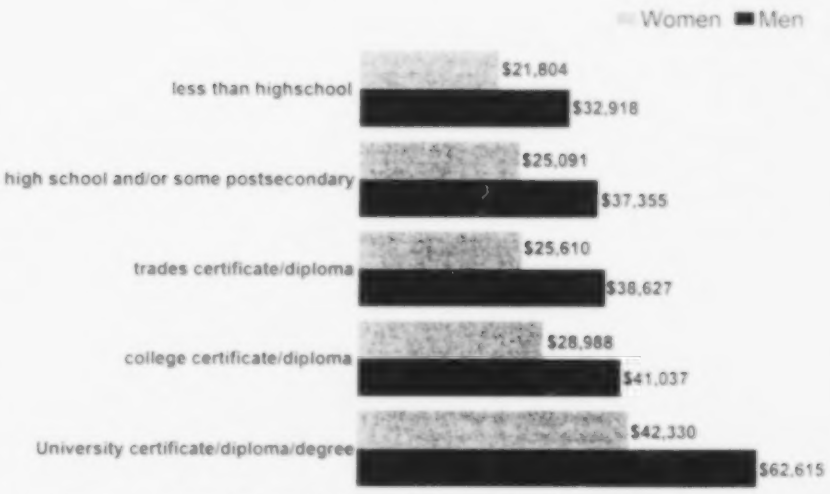
- Because women are more likely than men to have non-standard work arrangements such as part-time or temporary work and because women are concentrated in clerical and sales/service occupations, they are also more likely than men to be earning lower salaries and have fewer work-related benefits.

- In 2003, close to 62% of all female workers in Nova Scotia earned less than $10.00 per hour compared to 38% of male workers.

- Interestingly, the gender wage gap varies greatly depending on marital status, with women definitely paying a marriage "premium". In 2001, single women in Nova Scotia earned 98.8% of what single men earned. Married women, on the other hand, who still bear primary responsibility for the unpaid work in the home, including the care of children, earned only 68.7% of their married male counterparts' wages.

- The gender wage gap is evident at all levels of education. On average, women must have a university certificate, diploma, or degree before their earnings surpass those of men with less than highschool levels of education.

Average Employment Income by Educational Attainment and Sex
Full-Year, Full-Time Workers, Nova Scotia, 2000



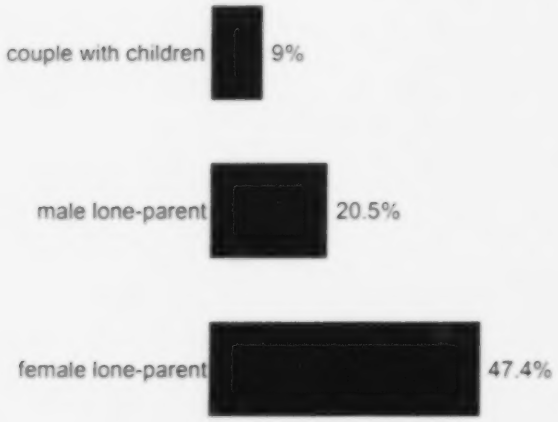
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, Table # 97F0019XCB01002

- The consequences of women's continuing economic inequality are obvious. Overall, women in Nova Scotia are more vulnerable to poverty than are men with certain groups of women being at particularly high risk of living in poverty.

- Overall, 14.7% of Nova Scotian males and 18.3% of Nova Scotian females were living below the low-income cut-offs in 2001 (see attached Low-Income Cut-Off table).

♀ Retirement income is largely tied to the income one has earned over the course of one's life. As women's economic disadvantage is evident across their lifespan, it is not surprising that they are less likely to contribute to an RRSP than are men and are also likely to make smaller RRSP contributions than men. In consequence senior women, particularly if living alone, continue to have significantly greater poverty rates than senior men. In Nova Scotia, 38.6% of female seniors who live alone are living below the poverty lines compared to 24.2% of male seniors who are living alone.

Incidence of Low Income by Family Type
Families with Children - Nova Scotia, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, Table # 97F0020XCB01075.

♀ The risk of living in poverty varies greatly depending upon family status. Female lone parents have the highest incidence of low income of any family type. Families headed by female lone parents are five times more likely to be living in poverty than are couple families.

[1] Source: *The Unappreciated Value of Housework: Women's unpaid labour subsidizes the global economy*. Penny Kome, CCPA Monitor, June 2000.

All other statistics used in this fact sheet are from Statistics Canada 2001 Census and/or Labour Force Survey. For more detailed statistics about women's paid and unpaid work, please see the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women's website at: http://www.gov.ns.ca/staw/pubs2003_04/womenswork2004.pdf

Statistics prepared for le Sommet des Femmes 2004
by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women